



## GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF & HARD OF HEARING

# ODHH Monthly Bulletin

April 2011

## A message from Director Lisa Kornberg

The clocks aren't the only things that are moving forward this month. The staff at ODHH continues to work to improve the quality of life for Maryland's deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind citizens.

At the beginning of March, the Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing met to discuss issues facing Marylanders with hearing loss. Topics included legislative session, access at BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, services for people who are deafblind, and social opportunities for deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind students. Since then, members of the Communication Access Subcommittee, led by Chair Shane Feldman, took a tour of BWI to explore the accessibility features of the airport.

Legislative session is in full swing and there are still a number of important issues pending before the legislature. It is important that we all take action so that Maryland continues to be at the forefront of ensuring equal access for all of its diverse citizens. See article below.

Finally, despite all of the progress we see in Maryland, we must always take a moment to look back and acknowledge the important moments in history. That's why Deaf History Month is so important - it reminds us of how far we have come and of the work still to be done. See article Below.

One of the mottos of the O'Malley-Brown Administration is moving Maryland forward. This principle guides the efforts of ODHH and we are proud to work with our State and community partners to promote continuous progress in the State.

Happy Spring!  
-Lisa

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## Celebrating Deaf History Month

*\*from About.com*



Deaf History Month covers the period of March 13 to April 15. It celebrates deaf history, particularly key events in deaf heritage.

### **Key Historic Events:**

Three key events occurred during deaf history month:



### Take the FCC Survey on Accessible 9-1-1

The FCC's Emergency Access Advisory Committee (EAAC) released a national online survey to determine the most effective and efficient technologies and methods by which persons with disabilities may access Next Generation 9-1-1 emergency services systems. Among other things, the survey asks about accessing emergency services via video, text, and voice.

The results of the survey will inform the EAAC as it develops recommendations for the FCC to draft rules to ensure that people with disabilities can access NG 9-1-1 services.

This survey will be available until April 24, 2011.

Link to the survey in English and American Sign Language (ASL):  
<http://fcc.eaac.sgizmo.com/s3>

### **Quick Links**

#### ODHH Website



#### Contact Us

#### Maryland.gov

- March 13 - 1988 Deaf President Now movement succeeds. King Jordan becomes president of Gallaudet University.
- April 8 - Gallaudet University founded. President Lincoln signed the charter in 1864 establishing a college for the deaf. This event is known as Gallaudet Charter Day, and is usually marked with a luncheon and awards program at Gallaudet University.
- April 15 - American School for the Deaf, the first public school for deaf, opens in 1817.

#### Promoting Deaf History Month:

Alice Hagemeyer, founder of Friends of Libraries for Deaf Action (FOLDA), now the Library Friends Section of NAD, actively promotes Deaf History Month annually. During this month, libraries are encouraged to have deaf awareness activities.

#### Start of Deaf History Month:

Deaf History Month appears to have had its genesis March 13, 1997, when the D.C. Public Library had a Deaf History Month event with deaf authors and guest speakers. The popularity of Deaf History Month grew over time, and there is currently an effort under way by the American Library Association and the National Association of the Deaf to get the White House to declare it an official national event.

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#### ODHH on the Move

#### Sine Die (Last Day of Legislative Session)

Monday, April 11  
Midnight  
Annapolis, MD

#### Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium

April 14-15  
National Federation of the Blind  
Baltimore, MD

#### Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day

Thursday, April 28  
Nationwide

## Legislative Updates



#### Captioning of Political Ads

Senate Bill 22 is still in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. Contact your senator today and ask that he or she act on this important legislation.

Meanwhile, Delegate Hogan introduced House Bill 1000, which, like SB 22, would require that candidates for Governor, Lt. Governor, Comptroller,

and Attorney General make their campaign advertisements accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. That bill is also still in Committee. Contact your delegates and ask that they support HB 1000.

#### Internet Access

Earlier this month, landmark legislation was introduced in Maryland related to access to the Internet. Senate Bill 596/House Bill 580 would require that the Internet website of a business that provides goods and services to anyone in Maryland be accessible to people with disabilities, including people who are deaf or hard of hearing. This means that if a business is posting videos online, those videos would have to be captioned. The law will apply only to those businesses that earn over \$1 million per year.

The House Health and Government Operations Committee gave HB 580 an unfavorable report and the House version of the bill was withdrawn.

#### Hearing Aid Loan Bank

Senate Bill 754/House Bill 1013 would establish a permanent Hearing Aid Loan Bank in the State. The Hearing Aid Loan Bank was created as a bridge between newborn hearing screening and early intervention. Its purpose is to provide infants and toddlers under the age of three years immediate access to hearing aids following confirmation of hearing loss by an audiologist. A six-month loan period may be granted to provide the parents, or legal guardians of infants and toddlers, adequate time to secure permanent amplification through personal resources, insurance, or community assistance programs.

The Senate passed this legislation with an amendment and is also out of the House committee. HB 1013 will soon be voted on by the full House.

## Maryland School for the Deaf Wins 2011 Academic Bowl Championship

For the second year in a row, the Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD) Academic Bowl team (seniors Todd Bonheyo and Christy Hediger, junior Andrew Biskupiak and sophomore Ethan Sonnenstrahl, and coaches Patrick Rosenberg and Edna Johnston) captured the National High School Academic Bowl Championship! The team beat seventy-seven other schools and programs for deaf and hard of hearing students in a grueling four-day competition.



After going 14-1 in combined pool play, MSD beat the Kansas School for the Deaf in the first round, then beat Tucson Area Public Schools (AZ) in the quarterfinals and beat the Indiana School for the Deaf in the semifinals. In the championship match, MSD beat the New Mexico School for the Deaf, 48-29. Todd and Christy were selected to the tournament all-star team. For full details, please go to <http://oes.gallaudet.edu/ab/>.

Gallaudet University established the Academic Bowl for Deaf and Hard of Hearing High School Students in 1997, with the goal of promoting academic competition among school teams. Quiz tournaments, in which teams of high school students compete against each other in local, regional, and national events, have gained wide popularity among high schools and colleges throughout the country.

Congratulations to the team and to MSD!

### Questions? Comments? Contact:

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